

GUIDE TO ATTRACTING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE



### Roles and Responsibilities of Participants Matching Agencies and High Schools

### Dear Colleagues,

Each year the Federal CIO community sponsors an IT Job Shadow Day in collaboration with Junior Achievement and the Association for Federal Information Resources Management to provide high school students a day's view of the world of federal information technology management.

Under the theme "Moving IT Forward: The Net Generation," IT Job Shadow Day is an academic activity designed to give students the unique opportunity to observe first-hand the federal IT work environment. Students learn about the Federal Government as they "shadow" IT professionals and their organizations throughout the work day. The intent of the event is to personalize the face of government; to give students an awareness of the challenges and career opportunities available in the federal IT workforce; and to help them see the connection between learning and their future earnings potential.

This IT Job Shadow Day Guide and Tool Kit can be used across agencies to help manage the day's activities. I hope you'll find them useful in preparing for the day's event as the Council continues to build upon each year's successes.

Regards,

Dave Wennergren Vice Chair

Federal CIO Council



The IT Job Shadow Guide is designed to help participants plan an outreach event for high school students. Job Shadow Day is an opportunity for high school students to learn about the real world of work in both private and public sectors. Originally, Job Shadow Day was conducted by the Boston Private Industry Council in 1996 as part of its school-to-work effort. In 1998, a coalition was formed by America's Promise, Junior Achievement, U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Labor to encourage participation in Job Shadow Day throughout the country. Since the inception of the program more than a million students across the country have participated. The event is held annually in early February.

Historically, the day has been beneficial and meaningful to all participants: coordinators, hosts, and students. The program encourages students to learn about various careers and make the connection between "learning and earning." Each student may be assigned to a professional or meet with several professionals during the day.

As a spin off of Job Shadow Day, the Federal Chief Information Officers Council in partnership with Junior Achievement (JA) and the Association for Federal Information Management (AFFIRM), Resources established an IT Job Shadow Day in 2001. The event has been highly successful and continues to grow each succeeding year. The goal of IT Job Shadow Day is to provide a favorable experience for high school students to learn about IT positions while fostering an appreciation for public service. The IT Job Shadow Day is just one of many programs the Council leads to encourage students to consider the Federal Government as a future employer.

The flow of secure information is the nexus for the Federal Government to accomplish its mission. Due to the proportion of workers expected to retire in the next few years, recruiting the future federal IT workforce is a priority of the Council.

An IT Job Shadow Day helps federal agencies to establish relationships with schools and build recruitment pipelines. The students have an opportunity to learn about pursuing careers in the IT field and learn how critical information, information systems and the infrastructure are to the Federal Government and its employees.

The IT Job Shadow Guide is designed to help coordinators plan the event. Using this guide will save the planners' considerable time in preparing for the day. The guide provides an overview of the event and includes suggestions of possible activities. The IT Job Shadow Day Tool Kit contains supplemental materials and templates for agency use and adaptation.

# PURPOSE

of IT Shadow Job Day is to introduce students to the world offederal information technology – its mission and its workforce. Specifically, the objective of the day is to:

- Demonstrate the connection between academics and potential careers
- Build community partnerships between schools and government agencies
- Enhance the educational experience of all participating students
- Introduce students to the educational and skill requirements of federal IT professionals

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS

Workplace Coordinators: Each agency should select a workplace coordinator. The workplace coordinators provide the overall leadership, energy and enthusiasm to make the day a success. The workplace coordinators are the link between the agency and the school and should ensure that the hosts and school coordinators clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. The workplace coordinators should communicate in writing to the school coordinators the number of students the agency can host and after doing so, should begin to solicit hosts. The workplace coordinators:

- Coordinate with an interagency committee/ school coordinators
- Recruit hosts
- Conduct orientation and planning meetings
- Plan the IT Job Shadow Day agenda

Hosts: The agenda will drive how many hosts are required. After the hosts are identified several meetings may be required to finalize the agenda and coordinate the logistics for the day. If one-to-one shadowing is to occur, the workplace coordinators should assign each student to a host. Students often relate best to employees closer to their age; however, the student may also enjoy learning from seasoned professionals about how they evolved in their careers. To keep the planning on track a checklist is provided in the IT Job Shadow Day Tool Kit. Workplace coordinators should have continuous communications with the designated school coordinators during the planning for the IT Job Shadow Day.

Hosts are government employees who should have a positive attitude and enjoy working with young people. The host should be willing to commit to help plan and participate in the IT Job Shadow Day event. Hosts can enlighten the students about the education and skills necessary to become a federal IT professional. The hosts can also explain the benefits and rewards of working for the Federal Government. The role of the hosts should be to:

- Mentor a student
- Serve as "shadows"
- Demonstrate job tasks

School Coordinators: The role of the school coordinators should be to identify students who want to participate in IT Job Shadow Day and manage the logistics on behalf of the students (i.e., prepare the necessary paperwork for the students' visit). Generally, the schools prefer to use their own permission slips; however, permission forms and other useful information can be found on the JA web site at http:// www.jobshadow.org/. Permission slips should include an authorization for the agencies to take photographs or film the students. The school coordinators are responsible for arranging for transportation for the students and selecting chaperones to accompany the students. The school coordinators provide names and other requested information to the agency by the specified deadline. The school coordinators inform the workplace coordinators if any of the students have special needs, i.e., dietary restrictions or a disability requiring special assistance. With the assistance of the school coordinators, the students should prepare questions for the IT professionals who they will meet. The school coordinators should ensure that students show up to the event on time and are dressed appropriately, as directed by the workplace coordinators.

**Students:** Job shadowing is an opportunity that should be available to all high schools students not limited solely to those students who are in gifted and talented programs. However, since the purpose of IT Job Shadow Day is to attract students to work for the Federal Government in the field of information technology the event may be more suitable for math, science, or computer science students. The students will have an opportunity to observe IT professionals at their job. Students can prepare for the day by learning about the agency that they will visit. On IT Job Shadow Day, students will have a chance to practice their communication skills by interacting with IT professionals. Past experience has shown that the students like to be fully engaged in the activities.

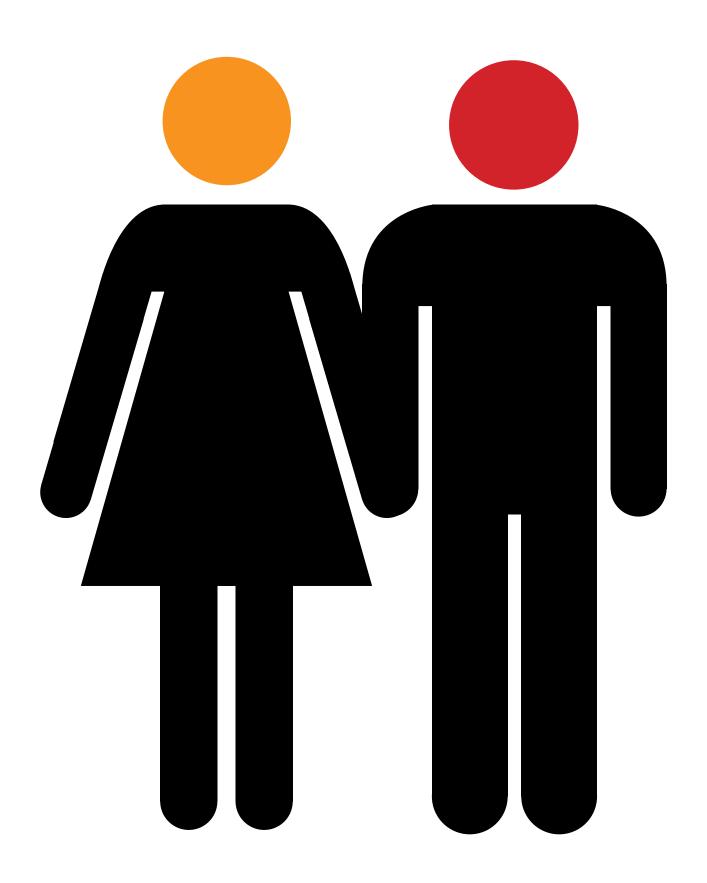
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## PREPARATION IS THE KEY TO

Students, hosts and workplace and school coordinators play an integral and key role in IT Job Shadow Day. An orientation should be conducted for the hosts, workplace and school coordinators. The orientation helps the participants fully understand the purpose of the event and their particular roles and responsibilities.

Early planning for IT Job Shadow Day should begin in September after the students have begun their school year. The most successful events are a result of early planning and conducting an orientation for coordinators and hosts and strong commitment by all to ensure a successful day. See the IT Job Shadow Day Guide Tool Kit for templates to use for planning the event.

Both the workplace and school coordinators should begin early to solicit participation and advertise the event through web postings, flyers, posters, press releases, etc. Approximately three months prior to the IT Job Shadow Day, school coordinators should identify students who want to participate in the event and provide their names to the workplace coordinators. If possible, workplace coordinators should meet face-to-face with the school coordinators and/or speak with students in math, science and computer classes to help promote the event. Ongoing communication is important to ensure that the high school is on track and still committed to participating in the event.



### MATCHING AGENCIES WITH HIGH SCHOOLS

In some locations where there is a large Federal Government presence, an interagency committee might be established to take a leadership role in coordinating the event. The Committee's responsibilities may include announcing the event and recruiting participants from schools and agencies. For logistical reasons, high schools usually prefer to be matched with agencies in close proximity to the school. If an interagency committee is not established then identifying a school will be the responsibility of the workplace coordinators. A school can be identified by:

- Contacting county coordinators/career specialists
- Soliciting interest from IT academies
- Requesting assistance from a Junior Achievement representative
- Asking employees who are parents to recruit their son/daughter's school

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## PLANNING THE AGENDA

The agenda should be structured around the students' needs. The most successful events have provided students opportunities to have a variety of experiences throughout the day.

Since the event must be scheduled around the regular school day and school bus schedules, most agencies host the event for 4-6 hours. Each shadow experience is unique and can be tailored to each organization. An important aspect of the event is for all those who participate to have fun!

Coordinators are encouraged to be creative in planning the day and welcoming the students. For example, some agencies have met students at the government building entrance holding the school pennant or a welcome sign. Other agencies have offered milk/juice and doughnuts as an "ice breaker" to help get the day started.

Generally, the day begins with an introduction of participants and a discussion of the agenda. Although some formal presentations are appropriate, typically the students prefer to be in an active mode rather than passive. Coordinators are urged to plan activities that challenge the students to investigate and discuss real-life issues. The agenda usually includes an overview of the organization's mission, several activities where students can be exposed to duties of IT positions, information about scholarship programs and how to apply for a government job.

Keeping in mind the characteristics of the Net Generation (born between 1965 and 1977) may assist agencies in being creative in planning an agenda. "The Net Generation Eight Norms" are: Freedom, Customization, Scrutinizers, Integrity, Collaboration, Entertainment, Speed and Innovation. (See IT Job Shadow Day Tool Kit for more explanation on these characteristics).

Below are examples of some of the activities that have occurred during past IT Job Shadow Days:

- The students at the National Institute of Health saw a virtual autopsy. Afterwards they learned about telesynergy; and how a patient can be remotely diagnosed through collaborative efforts by medical personnel.
- Two students at the Office of Management and Budget attended a press conference, toured the Old Executive Office Building, and had lunch at The White House.
- Students at the Pentagon enjoyed seeing the Secretary of Defense's office, the data center, and demonstrations of 3-D Holograms and Vulnerability Assessment Testing.
- At the U.S. Court of Appeals, students had a chance to take apart a Judge's laptop and install a network card on his computer.

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- At U.S. Department of Agriculture, students participated in HSPD-12 activities at the Credential Processing Center.
- At the Internal Revenue Service and Commerce Department the students toured the Crisis Management Centers.
- Housing and Urban Development hosted the event for hearing-impaired students.
- At the Veterans Administration young IT professionals (former interns) spoke about the rewarding experiences of working in the IT field for the Federal Government
- Students using a teleprompter made a short video in the Social Security Administration's Systems Media Center.
- At the Department of Homeland Security students learned about the Cyber Crime Unit and the Federal Protective Control Center

Student booklets are useful for providing some additional information to the students. The booklets may include the IT Job Shadow Day agenda and supplemental materials, i.e., a list of types of IT positions, guidance in preparing a resume, information about scholarship programs or internships, and the application process for applying for a job. In open dialogue sessions, many agencies learned from the students about their expectations of a work environment. For example, students have indicated that they desire flexible work schedules and the chance to work with the latest technologies

Clearly, a goal of the IT Job Shadow Day program is to cultivate relationships with the students to find interns and permanent hires. As a result of IT Job Shadow Day, agencies should consider hiring some of the shadow students as summer interns. One of the hiring authorities used is the Student Temporary Experience Program (STEP).

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is a great opportunity to have informal discussions in a relaxed atmosphere. Although, many government agencies may not allow funds to be expended for food and/or drinks at the lunch, there are several options for consideration such as mangers buying pizza or having an approved source donate lunch for the students.



By the end of the day, the students should have a good understanding of the mission of the agency, types of IT positions and duties, benefits, and the necessary education and skills needed for obtaining IT positions within the Federal Government. Students appreciate receiving a Certificate of Participation and tokens from their visit, i.e., pens, notebooks, mouse pads, etc.

The final "wrap up" is a good time for the students to reflect on what they learned and for the IT professionals to answer additional questions and/ or obtain feedback from the students. In hopes that IT Job Shadow Day will continually improve and participation will increase, student evaluation forms are useful to identify the activities that the students liked the most and ways to improve future events. In addition to students' evaluations, workplace coordinators, hosts and school coordinators may have valuable input on those aspects of the day that were extremely beneficial to the students and those activities that may be modified or eliminated during future events.



